

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 9, 10, 15 and 17-20 are pending in the present application. Claim 15 has been amended. Claims 11-14 and 16 have been canceled.

Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 11-14 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Arase reference (Japanese Patent Publication No. 4-69939) in view of the Tu et al. reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,294,426).

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes the Examiner's acknowledgment that claims 1-7, 9, 10 and 17-20 are allowed.

Applicant also respectfully notes the Examiner's acknowledgement that claim 15 has been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Responsive to the acknowledgment of allowable subject matter, claim 15 has been amended to be in independent form, and claims 11-14 and 16 have been canceled. This amendment has been made merely to advance prosecution of this application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge that claim 15 is allowed.

Conclusion

Since claim 15 has merely been amended to be in independent form in view of the acknowledgement of allowable subject matter, and thus corresponds to previously examined claim 15, this Amendment should not be construed as narrowing scope within the meaning of *Festo*.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the corresponding rejection, and to pass the claims of the present application to issue, for at least the above reasons.

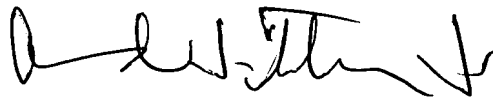
In the event that there are any outstanding matters remaining in the present application, please contact Andrew J. Telesz, Jr. (Reg. No. 33,581) at (571) 283-0720 in the Washington, D.C. area, to discuss these matters.

Pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicant hereby petitions for an extension of one (1) month to April 18, 2007, for the period in which to file a response to the outstanding Office Action. The required fee of \$120.00 should be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0238.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment for any additional fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0238.

Respectfully submitted,

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